

On May 2 nearly a million Germans surrendered as prisoners of war, and the war in Italy ended.

Benito Mussolini also had come. Like Hitler he seems to have kept his illusions until almost the last moment. Late in March he had paid a final visit to his German partner, and returned to his headquarters on Lake Garda laced up with the thought of his secret weapons which could lead to victory. But the rapid Allied advance from the Apennines made these hopes vain. There was little talk of a last stand in the mountains across on the Italian-Swiss frontier. But there was no will to fight left in the Italian Socialist Republic.

On April 25 Mussolini decided to disband the remnants of his armed forces and to ask the Cardinal Archbishop of Milan to arrange a meeting with the underground Military Committee of the Italian National Liberation Movement. That afternoon he took place in the Archbishop's palace, but with a last-minute gesture of independence Mussolini walked out. In the evening, followed by a convoy of thirty vehicles containing most of the surviving leaders of Italian Fascism, he drove to the prefecture at Como. He had no coherent plan, and as discussion became useless it was each man for himself. Accompanied by a handful of supporters, he attached himself to a small German army heading towards the Swiss frontier. The commander of the German army was not anxious for trouble with Italian Partisans. The force was persuaded to put on a German great-coat and helmet, but the little party stopped by Partisan patrols; Mussolini was recognized and taken into custody. Other members, including mistresses, Signorina Petacci, were also arrested. On Communist instructions the Duce and his mistresses were taken out in a car next day and shot. Their bodies, together with others, were sent to Milan and strung up head downwards on meat-hooks in a persecution on the Piazzale Loreto, where a group of Italian Partisans had lately been shot in public.

Each was the fate of the Italian dictator. A photograph of the final scene was sent to me, and I was profoundly shocked. I have seen the murdered Mussolini made a confession, published in the Daily Express, glowing over the treacherous and cowardly method of his action. In particular he said he shot M. Petacci's mistress. Was she on the list of war criminals? Had he any authority from anybody to shoot his woman? It seems to me the cleansing hand of British military power should make inquiries on these points.

At least the world was spared an Italian Nuremberg. Our loss had been grievous, but those of the enemy, even before the final surrender, far heavier. The principal task of our armies had been to draw off and contain the greatest possible number of German tanks. This had been admirably fulfilled. Except for a short period in the summer of 1944, the enemy had always outnumbered us. At the time of their crisis in August of that year no fewer than thirty-five German divisions were deployed along the Mediterranean fronts. Nor was this all. Our forces rounded off their task by devouring the larger army they had been ordered to contain. There have been few campaigns with a finer outcome.

In the middle of April it was clear that Hitler's Germany would soon be utterly destroyed. The invading armies drove onwards in their might and the space between them narrowed daily. Hitler had pondered where to make this last stand. As late as April 20 he still thought of leaving Berlin for the Southern Region in the Bavarian Alps. That day he held a meeting of the principal Nazi leaders. As the German double-front East and West was in imminent danger of being cut in twain by the spear-point thrust of the Allies, he agreed to set up two separate commands. Admiral Doenitz was to take charge in the North both of the military and civil authorities, with the particular task of bringing back to German soil nearly two million refugees from the East. In the South General Kesselring was to command the remaining German armies. These arrangements were to take effect if Berlin fell.

Two days later, on April 22, Hitler made his final and supreme decision to stay in Berlin to the end. The capital was soon completely encircled by the Russians and the Fuehrer had lost all power to control events. It remained for him to organize his own death amid the ruins of the city. He announced to the Nazi leaders who remained with him that he would die in Berlin. Goerring and Himmler had both left after the Conference of the 20th, with thoughts of peace negotiations in their minds. Goerring, who had gone south, assumed that Hitler had in fact abdicated by his decision to stay in Berlin, and asked for confirmation that

Chaos descended. Doenitz had been in touch with Himmler, who, he assumed, would be and now supreme responsibility was suddenly thrust upon him without warning and he faced the task of organising the surrender.

HIMMLER had for some months been urged to make personal contact with the Western Allies on his own initiative in the hope of negotiating a separate surrender. A General Schellenberg of the S.S. had proposed to him as an intermediary Count Bernadotte, the head of the Swedish Red Cross, who had occasion from time to time to visit Berlin. There had been secret meetings between Bernadotte and Himmler in February, and again in April, when Bernadotte visited the German capital. But the Nazi leader felt too deeply committed in his loyalty to Hitler to make any move. The Fuehrer's announcement on April 22 of the last stand in Berlin led him to act.

In the early hours of April 25 a telegram arrived in London from Sir Victor Mallet, British Minister to Sweden. He reported that at 11 p.m. on April 24 he and his American colleague, Mr. Herschel Johnson, had been asked to call upon the Swedish Minister for Foreign Affairs Mr. Boheman. The purpose of the interview was to meet Count Bernadotte, who had an urgent mission. Bernadotte told them that Himmler was on the Eastern Front, and had asked to meet him urgently in North Germany. Bernadotte suggested Liebeck, and they had met the previous evening. Himmler, though tired and admitting Germany was finished, was still calm and coherent. He said that Hitler was so desperately ill that he might be dead already, and in any case would be so within the next few days. Himmler stated that while the Fuehrer was still active he would not have been able to do what he now proposed, but as Hitler was finished he could act with full authority. He then asked if the Swedish Government would arrange for him to meet General Eisenhower and capitulate on the whole West.

BORMANN.

I received this news on the morning of April 25. Our reactions are shown in the message which I despatched to President Truman.

You will not doubt have received some hours ago the report from Stockholm by your Ambassador on the Bernadotte-Himmler meeting, and I have been reading the immediately following telegram in which we are sending to Marshal Stalin and repeating through the usual channels to you. We hope you will find it possible to telegraph to Marshal Stalin and to us in the same sense. As Himmler is evidently speaking for the German State, as much as anybody can, the reply that should be sent him through the Swedish Government is in principle of the same kind as the reply that should be sent him through the British Government. This fact, however, in no way abrogates General Eisenhower's or Field-Marshal Alexander's authority to accept local surrenders as they occur.

Here is the text of my covering message to Stalin:

Prime Minister to Marshal Stalin, 25 April 45

The President of the United States has the news also. There can be no question, as far as His Majesty's Government is concerned, of anything less than unconditional surrender. We simultaneously to the Allies told that German consider themselves as individuals or in units, should everywhere surrender themselves to the Allied troops or representatives on the spot.

His reply was the most cordial message I ever had from him.

Marshal Stalin to Prime Minister, 25 April 45

"... I consider your proposal to present to Himmler a demand for unconditional surrender on all fronts, including the Soviet Front, the only correct one. I beg you to act in the sense of your proposal, and the Red Army will maintain its pressure on Berlin in the interests of our common cause. I have to state, for your information, that I have given a similar reply to President Truman."

examination he bit open a phial of cyanide, which he had apparently hidden in his mouth for some hours. He died almost instantly, just after eleven o'clock at night on Wednesday, May 23.

In the north-west the drama closed less sensationally. On May 2 news arrived of the surrender in Italy. On the same day our troops reached Liebeck, on the Baltic, making contact with the Russians and cutting off all the Germans in Denmark and Norway. On the 3rd we entered Hamburg without opposition and the garrison surrendered unconditionally. A German delegation came to Montgomery's headquarters on Luneburg Heath. It was headed by Admiral Friedeburg, Doenitz's emissary, who sought a surrender agreement to include German troops in the north who were facing the Russians. This was rejected as being beyond the authority of an Army Group commander, who could deal only with his own front. Next day, having received fresh instructions from his superiors, Friedeburg signed the surrender of all German forces in North-West Germany, Holland, the Islands, Schleswig-Holstein, and Denmark.

In the course of a telegram to Mr. Eden at San Francisco, dated May 5, I told him:

In the north Eisenhower threw in an American corps with great dexterity to help Montgomery in his advance on Liebeck. He got there with twelve hours to spare.

In three successive days 2,500,000 Germans have surrendered to our British commanders. This is quite a satisfactory incident in our military history. He has been spending his time in the north with him in sports-grounds.

Friedeburg went on to Eisenhower's headquarters at Rhinens, where he was joined by General Jodl on May 6. They played for time to allow as many soldiers and refugees as possible to disentangle themselves from the Russians and come over to the Western Allies, and they tried to surrender the Western Front separately. Eisenhower imposed a time-limit and insisted on a general capitulation.

The instrument of total, unconditional surrender was signed by Lieutenant General Bedell Smith and General Jodl, with French and Russian officers as witnesses, at 2.41 a.m. on May 7. Thereby all hostilities ceased at midnight on May 8. The formal ratification by the German High Command took place in Berlin under Russian arrangements, in the early hours of May 9. Air Chief Marshal Tedder signed on behalf of Eisenhower. Marshal Zhukov for the Russians, and Field-Marshal Keitel for Germany.

The final destruction of the German Army has been related; it remains to describe the end of Hitler's other fighting forces. During the previous autumn the German Air Force, by a remarkable feat of organisation, but at the cost of its long-range bomber output, had greatly increased the numbers of its fighter aircraft. Our strategic bombing had thrown it on to the defensive and 70 per cent of its fighters had to be used for home defence.

I felt the time had come to reconsider our policy of bombing industrial areas. Victory was close and we had to think ahead. "If we come into control of an entirely ruined land," I wrote, on April 1, "there will be a great shortage of accommodation for ourselves and our Allies. We must see to it that our attacks do not do more harm to ourselves than they do to the enemy's immediate war effort."

In judging the contribution to victory of strategic air-power it should be remembered that this was the first war in which it was fully used. We had to learn from hard-won experience. Success depends on sound decisions from a mass of intelligence, often specialised and highly technical, on every aspect of the enemy's national life, and much of this information was to be gathered in peace-time.

battle honour by all His Majesty's Armed Forces of all the races in all the lands. Let me tell you, in him we have had a man who set the unity of the Allied Armies above all nationalistic thoughts. In his death we have lost a truly great man.

The unity reached such a point that British and American troops could be mixed in the line of battle and large masses could be transferred from one command to the other without the slightest difficulty. At no time has the principle of alliance between noble races been carried and maintained at so high a pitch in the name of the British Empire and Commonwealth. I express to you my admiration for the firm, steady and unflinching devotion and qualities of General of the Army Eisenhower.

I must also give expression to our British sentiments about all the valiant and magnanimous deeds of the United States of America under the leadership of President Roosevelt, so steadfastly carried forward by you, Mr. President, since his death in action.

The unconditional surrender of our enemies was the signal for the greatest outburst of joy in the history of mankind. The Second World War had indeed been fought to the bitter end in Europe. The vanquished as well as the victors felt inexpressible relief. But for us in Britain and the British Empire, who had alone been in the struggle from the first day to the last, and staked our existence on the result, there was a meaning beyond what even our most powerful and most valiant Allies could feel. Weary and worn, impoverished but undaunted and now triumphant, we had a moment that was sublime. We gave thanks to God for the nobest of all His blessings: the sense that we had done our duty.

When in these tumultuous days of rejoicing I was asked to speak to the nation I had borne the chief responsibility in our Island for almost exactly five years. Yet it may well be there were few whose hearts were more heavily burdened with anxiety than mine. After reviewing the varied tale of our fortunes I struck a sombre note which may be recorded here.

"I wish," I said, "I could tell you to-night that all our troubles and troubles were over. Then indeed I could and my five years' service happily and if you thought that you had had enough of it, I would like to be put out to grass. But on the contrary I must warn you, as I did when I began this five years' task—and no one knew that it would last so long—that there is still a lot to do and that you must be prepared for further efforts of mind and body and further sacrifices to great causes if you are not to fall back into the rut of inertia, the confusion of aim, and the craven fear of being green.

On the continent of Europe we have yet to make sure that the simple and honourable purposes for which we entered the war are not brushed aside or overlaid by the words following our success, and that the words 'freedom, democracy, and liberation' are not distorted from their true meaning as we have understood them. There would be little use in punishing the Hitlerites for the crimes if law and justice did not rule, and if totalitarian or police Governments were to take the place of the German invaders. We seek nothing for ourselves. But we must make sure that those causes which we fought for find recognition at the peace table, in facts as well as words, and above all we must labour to ensure that the World Organisation which the United Nations are creating at San Francisco does not become an idle name, and a mockery for their nobility and strength who must search their hearts in their glowing hours, and be worthy by their nobility of the immense forces that they wield."

Copyright, 1945 in U.S.A. by The New York Times Company and in Great Britain by The Associated Press. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced in any form without the written permission of the publishers.

A tiff with Tito and Stalin over Trieste is related in Tomorrow's installment.



THE NEW YORK TIMES  
BORN WAS THE END—Body of Benito Mussolini in Milan's Piazzale Loreto after his execution by Italian Partisans. Also shown is the body of his mistress, Clara Petacci, also executed.

CPYRGHT

CPYRGHT

Approved For Release 2000/08/24 : CIA-RDP70-00058R000100080021-9

CPYRGHT

WHILE NAZI WAR MACHINE WAS COLLAPSING  
THEY KNEW THE END WAS NEAR

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 18, 1953.

33

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 18, 1953.

The New York Times

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 18, 1953.

# By Winston Churchill: The Second World War

Volume VI—Triumph and Tragedy

CPYRGHT

INSTALLMENT 23—THE GERMAN SURRENDER

CPYRGHT

Book II—The Iron Curtain

The Allied Pursuit across the Po—A New German Peace Offer—Unconditional Surrender in Italy, April 29—Mussolini is Murdered—Hitler Resolves to Make His Last Stand in Berlin, April 22—His Suicide in the Bunker, April 30—Himmler's Peace Offer—The Instrument of General Capitulation is Signed at Rheims, May 7—The End of the Luftwaffe—Goering is Taken Prisoner in the Tyrol—My Victory Warning.

**G**REAT successes marked the end of our campaign in the Mediterranean. In December (1944) Alexander had succeeded Wilson as Supreme Commander, while Mark Clark took command of the Fifteenth Army Group. After their strenuous efforts of the autumn our armies in Italy needed a pause to reorganise and restore their offensive power.

The German High Command might have had little to fear had it not been for the dominance of our Air Forces, the fact that we had the initiative and could strike where we pleased, and that the enemy was in a defensive position, with the broad Po at their backs. They would have done better to yield Northern Italy and withdraw to the strong defences of the Adige, where they could have held us with much smaller forces and sent troops to help their over-matched armies elsewhere, or have made a firm southern face for the National Redoubt in the Tyrol mountains, which Hitler may have had in mind as his "last ditch."

But defeat south of the Po spelt disaster.

We crossed the Po on a broad front at the heels of the enemy. All the permanent bridges had been destroyed by our Air Forces, and the ferries and temporary crossings were attacked with such effect that the enemy were thrown into confusion. The remnants were unable to reorganise on the far bank. The Allied armies pursued them to the Adige. Italian Partisans had long harassed the signal was given for a general rising, and they made wide-spread attacks. In many cities and towns, notably Milan and Venice, they seized control.

Meanwhile the March negotiations for an armistice\* had probably come to Himmler's ears. Certainly he sent for General Wolff, the principal envoy and a high S. S. official in Italy, and questioned him closely. There was then a pause before the force of facts overcame German hesitations, but on April 24 Wolff reappeared in Switzerland with full powers from Vietinghoff. I hastened to tell the Russians.

**Prime Minister to Marshal Stalin** 26 Apr 45  
This is about "Crossword." The German envoys, with whom all contact was broken by us some days ago, have now arrived again on the Lake of Lucerne. They claim to have full powers to surrender the Army in Italy. Field-Marshal Alexander is therefore being told that he is free to permit these envoys to come to A.F.H.Q. in Italy. This they can easily do by going into France and being picked up by our aircraft from there. Will you please send Russian representatives forthwith to Field-Marshal Alexander's headquarters.

Field-Marshal Alexander is free to accept the unconditional surrender of the considerable enemy army on his front, but all political issues are reserved to the three Governments. . . .

Two plenipotentiaries were brought to Alexander's headquarters, and on April 29, they signed the instrument of unconditional surrender in the presence of high British, American, and Russian officers.

I duly informed Moscow.

he should act formally as the successor to the Fuehrer. The reply was his instant dismissal from all his offices.

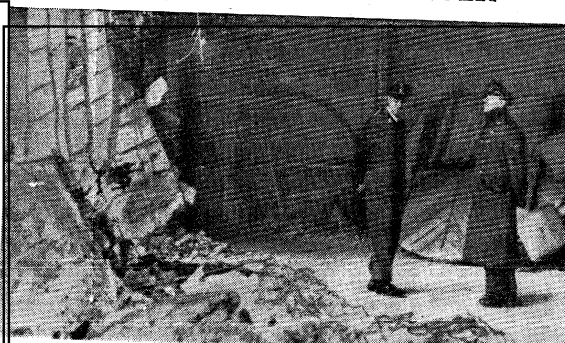
The last scenes at Hitler's headquarters have been described elsewhere in much detail. Of the personalities of the Third Reich only Goebbels and Bormann remained with him to the end. The Russian armies were now fighting in the streets of Berlin. In the early hours of April 29 Hitler made his will. The day opened with the normal routine of work in the air-raid shelter under the Chancellery. News arrived of Mussolini's end. The timing was grimly appropriate. On the 30th Hitler unchained quietly with his suite, and at the end of the meal shook hands with those present and retired to his private room. At half-past three a shot was heard, and members of his personal staff entered the room to find him lying on the sofa with a revolver by his side. He had shot himself through the mouth. Eva Braun, whom he had married secretly during these last days, lay dead beside him. He had taken poison. The bodies were burnt in the courtyard, and Hitler's funeral pyre, with the din of the Russian guns growing ever louder, made a lurid end to the Third Reich.

The course Hitler had taken was much more convenient for us than the one I had feared. At any time in the last few months of the war he could have flown to England and surrendered himself, saying, "Do what you will with me, but spare my misguided people." I have no doubt that he would have shared the fate of the Nuremberg criminals. The moral principles of modern civilisation seem to prescribe that the leaders of a nation defeated in war shall be put to death by the victors. This will certainly stir them to fight to the bitter end in any future war, and no matter how many lives are needlessly sacrificed it costs them no more. His the masses of the people who have so little to say about the starting or ending of wars who pay the additional cost. Julius Caesar followed the opposite principle, and his conquests were due almost as much to his clemency as to his prowess.

The leaders who were left held a final conference. Last-minute attempts were made to negotiate with the Russians, but Zhukov demanded unconditional surrender. Bormann tried to break through the Russian lines, and disappeared without trace. Goebbels poisoned his children and then ordered an S.S. guard to shoot his wife and himself. The remaining staff of Hitler's headquarters fell into Russian hands.

That evening a telegram reached Admiral Doenitz at his headquarters in Holstein:

In place of the former Reich-Marshal Goering the Fuehrer appoints you, Herr Grand Admiral, as his successor. Written authority is on its way.



THE END WAS NEAR: This picture, published in a German magazine, is believed to be one of the last of Adolf Hitler. Magazine said it was made on April 20, 1945, and showed the Nazi leader and his adjutant, Obergrouppenfuhrer Julius Schaub, in ruined Reich Chancellery.

**The New York Times** LATE CITY EDITION  
HITLER DEAD IN CHANCELLERY, NAZIS SAY;  
DOENITZ, SUCCESSOR, ORDERS WAR TO GO ON;  
BERLIN ALMOST WON; U. S. ARMIES ADVANCE  
HEADLINES: The news on the morning of May 2, 1945

Front. Bernadotte said there was no need for this as he could simply order his troops to surrender, and in any case he would not forward the request unless Norway and Denmark were included in the capitulation. If this were done there might be some point in a meeting, because special arrangements might be necessary as to how and to whom the Germans there were to lay down their arms. Himmler thereupon said he was prepared to order the German forces in Denmark and Norway to surrender to either British, American, or Swedish troops. When asked what he proposed to do if the Western Allies refused his offer, Himmler replied that he would take command of the Eastern Front and die in battle. Himmler said he hoped that the Western Allies rather than the Russians would be the first to enter Mecklenburg, in order to save the civilian population.

man, who also addressed to me the same inquiry. I answered:

**Prime Minister to Marshal Stalin** 27 Apr 45  
I am extremely pleased to know that you had no doubt how I would act, and always will act, towards your glorious country and yourself. British and I am sure American action on this matter will go forward on the lines you approve, and we all three will continually keep each other fully informed.

Count Bernadotte conveyed our demand to Himmler. No more was heard of the Nazi leader till May 21, when he was arrested by a British control post at Bremervorde. He was disguised and was not recognised; but his papers made the sentries suspicious and he was taken to a camp near Second Army Headquarters. He then told the commandant who he was. He was put under armed guard and searched for poison by a doctor. During the final stages of the

We certainly under-estimated the strong latent reserve in Germany's industry and the great resources she had gained from Occupied Europe. Thanks to well-organised relief measures, strict police action, and innate discipline and courage, the German people endured more than we had thought possible. But although the results of the early years fell short of our aims we forced on the enemy an elaborate, ever-growing but finally insufficient air defence system which absorbed a large proportion of their total war effort. Before the end we and the United States had developed striking forces so powerful that they played a major part in the economic collapse of Germany.

The final Russian attack, which began on April 16, provoked the Luftwaffe to a last-dying effort, but in a few days the great Berlin airfields, with many intact aircraft, were in Soviet hands, and like the German Army, the Air Force was split in two. Disruption and disintegration spread fast. It had no more power to recover and fell to pieces. Part of its headquarters escaped south from Berlin, and for a few days tried to operate from a lunatic asylum near Munich. Thence it scattered into Austria. In a remote mountain village of the Tyrol nearly a hundred of the more senior officers, including Goering himself, were taken prisoner by the Americans. Retribution had come at last.

The immense scale of events on land and in the air has tended to obscure the no less impressive victory at sea. The whole Anglo-American campaign in Europe depended upon the movement of convoys across the Atlantic and we may here carry the story of the U-boats to its conclusion. In spite of appalling losses to themselves they continued to attack but with diminishing success and the flow of shipping was unchecked. The Schnorkel-fitted boats now in service, breathing through a tube while charging their batteries submerged, were but an introduction to the new pattern of U-boat warfare which Doenitz had planned. The first of these were already under trial. Real success for Germany depended on their early arrival on service in large numbers. Their high submerged speed threatened us with new problems, and would indeed, as Doenitz predicted, have revolutionised U-boat warfare. His plans failed mainly because the special material needed to construct these vessels became very scarce, and their design had constantly to be changed. This weapon in Soviet hands lies among the hazards of the future.

In the hour of overwhelming victory I was only too well aware of the difficulties and perils that lay ahead, but here at least there could be a brief moment for rejoicing. The President sent me a telegram of congratulation and warmly recorded his government's appreciation of our contribution to victory. I replied:

**Prime Minister to President Truman** 9 May 45  
Your message is cherished by the British

Approved For Release 2000/08/24 : CIA-RDP70-00058R000100080021-9